

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIR QUALITY HEALTH ADVISORY FROM SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER

San Bernardino – Air quality is being affected by smoke from the Oak Glen wildfire in San Bernardino County and the Station wildfire in Los Angeles County. The South Coast Air Quality Management District forecasts unhealthy air quality or higher, in smoke impacted areas, especially near the fires. These areas include the East San Bernardino Mountains, and the East San Bernardino Valley near the Yucaipa fire. San Bernardino County Public Health Officer Maxwell Ohikhuare, M.D., advised that “all individuals in these areas should avoid unnecessary outdoor activities.” He emphasized that “infants, children, pregnant women, older adults, and people with lung or heart disease are at greater risk from smoke.”

Breathing smoke from outdoor fires can cause:

- Coughing, or scratchy throat
- Irritated sinuses
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Headaches
- Stinging eyes
- Runny nose
- Flare up of asthma symptoms

Dr. Ohikhuare advises people to follow these steps to protect yourself and your family:

- Limit exposure to smoke outdoors and indoors. This is especially important for people with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly and children.
- Avoid activities that put extra demands on your lungs and heart. These include exercising or physical chores, both outdoors and indoors.
- Stay inside with windows and doors closed and use your air conditioner. Keep the fresh air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent smoke from getting inside.
- If you do not have an air conditioner and it's too hot inside, seek an alternate shelter.
- Make sure you take all your medications according to the doctor's directions. Dust masks, bandanas, or other cloths (even if wet) will not protect you from smoke.

Contact your doctor if you have symptoms such as chest pain, chest tightness, shortness of breath, or severe fatigue. This is important for not only people with chronic lung or heart disease, but also for individuals who have not been previously diagnosed with such illnesses. Smoke can "unmask" or produce symptoms of such diseases.

For more information visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at
<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires/> .

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County Administrative Officer

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